

ADDRESS  
OF  
DR. RENTARO MIZUNO,  
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERINTENDENT  
OF THE  
GOVERNMENT-GENERAL OF CHOSEN  
AT  
THE TENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF  
THE FEDERAL COUNCIL  
OF  
PROTESTANT EVANGELICAL MISSIONS IN KOREA

SEPTEMBER 21, 1921.



## ADDRESS

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**M**R. CHAIRMAN, DELEGATES, and FRIENDS of the Federal Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea,—taking advantage of your invitation, I am exceedingly glad to be present at this, the Tenth Annual Conference of your Federal Council, and I extend to you our cordial and most sincere greetings.

Although this is my first attendance at a session of the Federal Council, most of your faces are familiar to me as I have had other opportunities of meeting and talking with you during the past two years, and this morning I have nothing particularly new to say to you. I simply wish to express my appreciation of your work in Chosen and, at the same time, speak a little on the relation of your work to the present administration. Of late I have made several trips into the country, and the more familiar I become with the conditions in the peninsula, the more do I realize how painstakingly you labour for the uplift of the people. In spite of more than fifteen years' co-operation of Japanese with the Koreans in working for the improvement and development of the country, the scars occasioned by the old maladministration are still manifest throughout the land. Though life and property are now securely guaranteed, you, who by birth are entitled to comfortable circumstances at home, have still to bear great inconveniences and hardships in this the chosen scene of your labour. If it were not for my knowledge of

your religious conviction and enjoyment of a sacrificial life, I would express my sympathy with you by saying, I am very sorry for you. It can be said without any appearance of flattery that Chosen owes much of her advancement in civilization to your labours.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, are not you and we co-workers in Chosen and both aiming at the same object though from different standpoints? Nothing is so essential as religious influence for the betterment of social conditions, and your work is of great help to the Government and directly or indirectly promotes the happiness and prosperity of the whole people. So we hold Christianity in high regard and give to it every possible facility for its propagation. For this reason the regulations for private schools were, as you know, revised in March 1920, and those for religious propagation in the month following, while the recognition of religious bodies as juridical persons was effected in June of the same year, thus greatly relieving you, I believe, of the burden imposed on you by the complexity of the old regulations framed ten years ago to meet the conditions then in evidence.

Our administration, as your work also, is based upon the principle of justice and humanity, and no discriminatory treatment is allowed to be practised between Koreans and Japanese. The abolition of flogging, the revision of the Educational Regulations, the improvement of medical and sanitary organs, and the revision of the local administrative system have all been carried out in accordance with this principle, and furthermore, the Educational Ordinance for Chosen is now being revised so that the school system in

Chosen may be made entirely one with that of Japan proper. We heard recently of a sympathetic foreign critic remarking after his trip in Chosen that he had received the impression that Koreans regarded Japan as a step-mother. We do not know whether his impression is a correct one or not, but we do know that the idea of playing the part of a step-mother has never once been entertained by us, and that though Koreans may take up the attitude of step-children, we shall ever be true to that of a real mother.

It is a matter of great regret, however, that, in spite of our efforts to make our ideas thoroughly known to all Government officials, mistakes and blunders by them have not been entirely avoided. As we can not expect all our men to be 100 per cent. right, we are ever ready to redress the faults they may commit. In this respect we owe much, and I wish here to express my thanks for it, to many of you for your zeal in calling our attention to what has appeared to you to be wrong and have frankly given us suggestions and advice. The Resolutions adopted and presented by you to the Governor-General in 1919 were also received with deep appreciation, and I am glad to say that nearly all the ideas in them which were possible of realization have since been carried out. It must, of course, be admitted that your conclusions have not always been correct but have at times been based upon sheer misunderstanding or upon stories maliciously fabricated; still your action gave us, to say the least, opportunity time and again to make clear the facts and bring about better understanding between us. One of your well-known critics, for instance, called on me one day last year and in the course

of conversation made the assertion that there still existed in Seoul Prison discriminatory treatment between Japanese and Korean prisoners in the matter of clothing and food. This, if correct, was contrary to the guiding principle of the administration, so the next day I went without previous notice to the prison to ascertain for myself whether such was the practice or not, and, to my great pleasure, found that no such discrimination existed between the two classes in the least. I at once made known this fact to the gentleman in question, and added that if he so desired he was free to visit the prison himself and draw his own conclusions. This he did, and I heard later that he was quite satisfied his assertion had been based on ignorance of the facts, and that he had spoken of me as a very honest man.

At the same time, however, I am very sorry to be obliged to point out that there have been brought to our notice all sorts of misrepresentation of the Japanese administration in Korea that have been hatched by different propagandists for a purpose, and missionaries have often been made the victims of them. To cite a recent instance: one of your body who returned some time ago to America on furlough was spoken of in an American yellow paper as "Refused permission for years to leave Korea because of his intimate knowledge of tortures inflicted upon the Koreans", and so on, and was quoted as saying that "Japan is slowly strangling the Koreans to death"; that "innocent girls are daily victims of Japan's soldiery", that "whole fields of crops have been destroyed by the Japanese soldiers, so that the Koreans are compelled to go hungry"; that "Christian missionaries

among the natives have been shot to death for no reason and thousands have been driven into Manchuria as refugees” ; and much more to the same effect. I am as sorry for this gentleman of noble character as I am for Japan to be misrepresented in this way. Fortunately, the nature of the paper is so well known that intelligent readers doubtless paid scant attention to the article. There is, however, one article coming to my notice of late which contains a most distressing clause reading as follows :

“Our sympathies have been long aroused for the unmerited suffering through which an alien government has forced the virile Christians of Korea to go ; and as a condition of the continued friendliness of nations we urge that our own Government at Washington insist that Japanese officials in Korea shall interfere in no way with American missions and missionaries, and shall revoke all regulations by which mission schools are closed and devout Christians unjustly imprisoned ; that the opium trade, ostensibly outlawed by the civilized world, shall no longer be forced upon the unwilling Koreans, thousands of acres of whose territory are now alienated for the growth of the opium-poppy ;”

This is, as you are undoubtedly aware, a clause in the Resolution adopted by the World’s Christian Endeavors’ Convention at New York and printed in the July number of its organ. The Christian Endeavor Society being understood to be a body pledged not to bear false witness against others, it is a matter of surprise for us to see how precipitately such a resolution was adopted and published. We are by no means



against criticism of our administration ; on the contrary, we welcome such, as we have no other purpose than that of serving the Koreans in the fairest and best way possible. But we must denounce fabrications and gross exaggerations, and insist that facts alone be given to the world for the sake of truth and peace.

In conclusion allow me to repeat that you and we are co-workers having the same mission of uplifting the Koreans and promoting their happiness. Should we not then come closer together and work in unison in serving them ? Being but human, mistakes may easily be made by us in power which may be plain to you. If so can you not find it within yourselves to point out to us wherein you think the mistake lies ? I believe if men approach each other in a sincere spirit and with frank talk, all misunderstanding between them can be cleared up however great the difference of opinion may be. In this spirit of sincerity, Ladies and Gentlemen, we of the Government are open to your approach, and you will ever find us ready to lend a willing ear to you so that no shadow of distrust may darken your relations with the authorities.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your cordial invitation to this meeting, and for the opportunity thus given me of speaking my mind to you in all frankness and sincerity.





